

The Qur'an in Rome. Catholicism and the Study of Islam in Early Modern Era

Il Corano a Roma. Cattolicesimo e studio dell'Islam in epoca moderna

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The objective of this conference will be to give an overview of the perspectives through which the Catholic world studied the Qur'an and Islam at the beginning of the modern era (16th-17th centuries). We will try to show how although Catholic authors inherited a series of well-established polemical tools (*Collectio Toletana*, Riccoldo da Montecroce, etc.) from the Middle Ages they were nonetheless able to renew their approach to the study of Islam, adapting it to the new historical context and inaugurating a scientific and philological study of texts.

In the course of the event we will focus on the individual protagonists who embarked on the study of the Qur'an and Islam, and whose approaches were often conditioned by their personal sensitivity,

intellectual and religious sympathies, as well as by the professions they exercised: travelers, priests, polemicists, linguists and scholars of grammar, theologians, missionaries and diplomats. Furthermore, we will highlight how the study of the Qur'an and Islam has often been conditioned by issues of a religious nature internal to Christianity (the Reformation), as well as by philosophical and political questions (the Ottoman Empire).

The undisputed star of the two days will be the city of Rome. Visited and patronized by Eastern Christians and the center of Catholic missionary activity, Rome played a decisive role in the collection of oriental manuscripts, in their study, and in the composition of works on Islam. During the conference, therefore, we will investigate the connections between the Iberian Peninsula, North Africa and the city of Rome, with the Mediterranean Sea as an invariable background and a permeable border that made it possible for people, ideas and texts to travel between the Islamic and the Catholic world.

The protagonists of our study days will be some of the main Catholic interpreters of Islam, such as George Strachan (1572-1635), Ludovico Marracci (1612-1700) and some members of the Society of Jesus such as Ignazio Lomellini (1560-1645), Baldassarre Loyola Mandes (1631-1667), Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680), Tirso González de Santalla (1624-1705). We will also turn to the continental context, to see how the debates and materials produced between Rome and the Mediterranean stimulated further research on the Qur'an and Islam in Europe.

Finally, a session will be dedicated with some reports focused on a critical-theological reading of the authors and texts from the modern era.

We encourage the submission of proposals which deal with or cover the following topics:

- The Mediterranean network (Iberian Peninsula, North Africa, Middle East) which brought about the growth in Oriental and Islamic studies in Rome in the early modern period.
- Jesuits' encounters with Islam and the Qur'an during the 16th and 17th centuries.
- Ludovico Marracci and his work.
- Rome as the center of Catholic missionary activity. Religious orders and Institutions involved in Christian-Muslim relations and in the collection of oriental manuscripts within the city.
- Early modern Catholic theological understanding of Islam, the Qur'an and its doctrines.
- Critical reading of early modern Catholic sources regarding Islam through a post-Second Vatican Council consciousness of interreligious relations.

The event will be held both in presence in Rome and online.

Those who are interested to propose a paper should submit a title and short abstract by 1 November 2021 to federicostella83@gmail.com

Scientific Committee

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